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Iowa Farm Science Editorial Board

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Family Living Outlook for 1965... part 2

by Marcena Ver Ploeg

ONE IOWA farm couple — Les and Gen Newton and their children, Cathy, Joel and Julie — keep an eye on outlook predictions in planning the year ahead. Last month, we reported the outlook for household equipment, food and clothing and how the Newtons made use of outlook information.

This month's outlook for home furnishings, housing, recreation and education can be valuable in making important decisions on education expenses, family vacations, or home furnishings.

Here's what these trends look like for 1965:

Home Furnishings . . .

The "average" family's spending for new furniture and equipment during 1965 will probably be between \$200-\$250 — large enough for at least one major purchase.

Furniture price increases, when taken as a group, are expected to stay below price increases for all consumer goods. Within the group, prices of bedding, mattresses, dinette sets and carpeting will continue to cost more, while most other furniture and accessories will stay about the same or drop slightly.

Trends: You may not have noticed that furniture prices generally have held steady. Because if you're like most families, you don't

shop for items that compare to the quality of a few years ago but instead "buy up."

More emphasis is being placed on the home as a status symbol. You'll probably see more advertising that suggests some of your present furnishings are obsolete and need to be replaced with high fashion styles.

Furniture designs will show more Spanish, Japanese and Oriental influence.

What's New: "Furnished" furniture: Many furniture pieces include such built-in extras as concealed lighting, electrical outlets, tie racks and clothes hangers.

"Engineered" designs: Fine-looking furniture might disguise a refrigerator, warming unit, or maybe even a complete range. For your bedroom, there's a headboard with built-in clock radio, lamp that automatically extends, and adjustable upholstered back and armrests.

Thinner veneer: Due to shortage of walnut trees, a thinner veneer standard has been approved. Most manufacturers feel the thinner veneers will be just as durable.

Photographed finishes: Fake wood grains will be made to look more like the real thing by photographing the hardwood grain and printing it on a softwood surface.

Flame-retardant bedding: An improved flame-retardant finish is being applied to institutional items such as hospital draperies, gowns, and mattresses. The finish may be added later to mattresses for home purchase.

Soil and stain repellents: Don't expect magic from finishes that repel soil and stains. These do perform well, but industry spokesmen warn that you can't expect them to "put the catsup back on the hamburger."

Carpet competition: Carpets of man-made fibers or blends are now outselling all wool carpets.

Housing . . .

Nationally, there's some concern about the decline in the demand for new housing. But the drop isn't expected to continue very long when the World War II "baby boom" groups starts buying homes.

Trends: Higher mortgage limits approved last year for FHA-insured loans make possible the purchase of larger, higher quality houses.

A breakdown of housing costs is somewhat complex. Current wholesale prices show some upward swing for lumber, millwork, window glass, hardware and clay products. Wholesale prices were lower for plywood, plumbing, heating equipment and asphalt roofing.

You're almost certain to find a new range included in a new home "package." Other appliances that might be there, in order of descending frequency, are a refrigerator, dishwasher, and washer.

What's New: *More mobile homes:* One out of every 10 new houses sold is a mobile home. Double-wide and telescoping extra rooms are relatively new space extenders.

More "shell" houses: Houses sold with finished exteriors to buyers who finish the interiors and install equipment are



The Newtons are putting the finishing touches on their new home. Here Julie and her father measure for closet doors.



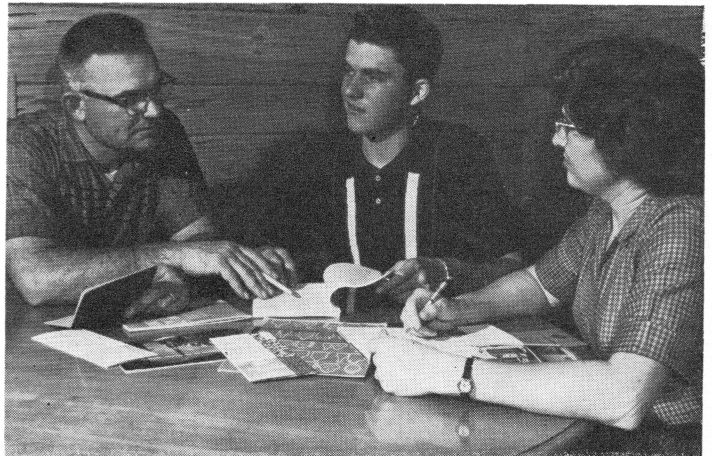
The Newtons were interested in the cost of housing materials as their project progressed. Working together they avoided high labor costs.



Books and study material are a big area of college expense for Kathy during the year.



The family believes in playing together. Their horses are a chief interest to all of them,



The Newtons look over information on colleges and Joel's savings account passbook.

growing in popularity in the Midwest.

Vinyl asbestos tile: Prices of vinyl asbestos tile increased January 1, but the price is still much lower than all-vinyl tile.

Recreation . . .

The family's recreation dollar is spent in many ways, ranging from hi-fi sound to camping gear. American families spend nearly \$25 billion for their leisure time activities, making recreational items a key industry for consumer goods.

What's New: *Color TV:* Two million families are expected to make the switch to color TV in 1965. When lower voltage tubes are used in color sets — possibly this year — some price drop is anticipated.

"Tinyvision": Low priced sets with 4-5 inch screens are predicted to become as popular as transistor radios in a few years.

Improved camping gear: A new finish for canvas and similar outdoor fabrics makes it mildew and rot resistant.

The "long weekend": The vacation is no longer viewed as one annual affair. More families are taking several shorter vacations, including several long weekends.

Education . . .

The focus on rising education costs is generally on college. But more attention is being given to pre-college education as additional services are added, such as pre-primary or extended services to special students, for example.

Trends: Increasing costs of college education are *not* expected to taper off in the foreseeable future. Parents in planning ahead for these expenditures should remember that it costs over \$800 per year on the average to keep a child at home.

Direct expenses, such as for field trips, lab fees, book rentals, locker fees, dues, etc., are going up. It's not unusual for these costs to be as high as \$2 per week at the junior and senior high school level.

What's New: *Vocational Education Act:* Federal assistance to develop technical schools is receiving attention.

More college loans: The National Defense Education Act revised loan funds and repayment provisions.

"Continuing" education: Adult education — both as a leisure time activity and as job retraining — is at an all time high.